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Nathaniel Hovey letter to William Clark, 1814 Aug. 16

Call Number: Mss. A64-124
Title: Letter: Headquarters, Fort Erie, to William Clark, Bradford County, Pa., 1814 Aug. 16
Author: Hovey, Nathaniel
Physical Description: 1 item (3 p.); 25 cm., (0.1 linear ft.)

Head Quarters Fort Erie, August 16 1814

Brother W^m Sir

Since I entered the service to defend the right of my country the continued buz of camp and the duties incumbent on me as an orderly sergeant & clerk to the command to which I belong have so much accepted my attention that I do not recollect that I have written you a single letter & I am well assured that I have not received one from you; but I cannot refrain from improving a few moments to state an affair of yesterday morning. Gen^l Drummond with his boasted army of at least 5000 well-bred European soldiers has besieged this Fort for two weeks past and there has been continued fighting ever since by continual cannonading skirmishes of patrollers picket guards etc. until night before last when the British as they had suffered the loss of about 500 men to about 100 on our part in these skirmishes were determined to decide the affair by one bold strike. They therefore selected 2000 of their choicest troops to take us by storm the residue of their force close at hand to reinforce stimulated with the idea that 3000 home bred yankees would be frightened out of their wits by the cry of No Quarters (which was their real watch word) echoed by thousands at once of those who are so religiously educated to the art of man killing but these desperadoes were mistaken, they made their attack about 3 o'clock yesterday morning and found us wide awake at this dead hour of night on our arms ready to receive them they brought 1000 of their veterans against each of our wings while the situation of our camp was such that it was impossible to bring more than one half of our force into action say 1500 and keep our line sufficient manned but the great disposer of all human wants stimulated all of our engines and guided all of our balls + pikes so that at fair day light we could discover the smiles of providence on a just cause for murderer was piled on murdered over bastions and the adjacent ground was stained with the enemies blood and the waters of the Niagara rendered impure by the floating carcasses the loss of the British in this action in killed wounded and prisoners is estimated to at least 1200 while ours did not exceed 18 in killed and about as many wounded the British acknowledge they have lost 15 or 1600 since the 2 just so that the boasted General Drummond has lost the pith of his noble army the American cause begins to smile and the [tear in page] battles [tear in page] the divine rights of free men to triumph over the assumed rights of tyrants we daily expect another attack as the British are daily reinforcing but we still remain ready to give them as warm a reception as before our Fort is made very strong + will take at least 3 to one to subdue us and we are still fortifying but I think we shall have warm work here before long since I commenced writing a deserter came into our Fort from the British says that a reinforcement of 2 regiments of the royal army are close at hand I wish you to write to me by mail as soon as possible if you please I should be very happy to see you here I think the satisfaction you would receive in seeing the Army and the Fortifications would amply satisfy you for the expense of the journey I have not received any reply as yet

but I expect we shall receive it next month whenever I do receive it I shall wish to send \$100 to my wife for her support if I can meet with a safe conveyance

Yours Very Respectfully

Mr. Wm Clark

Nathl Hovey

Sergt 23 Infty

Dear Wife

I with great satisfaction received yours of the sixth just and was happy to hear that you and the family were well but much more rejoiced to hear that you had a promising young William of five months old nourish him up for I am in hope of seeing him next winter + the rest of you if I can possibly obtain a furlough you observed you was in the want of money + I have been anxious to send you some but it has been totally out of my power as I have not as yet received one cent of my wages all the money I have had since I enlisted was premium for Recruits which I enlisted While on the recruiting service which has been very scanty expense money for me we have the promise now of soon receiving it + I have faith to believe that we shall soon be paid for the Officer observed to me this day that I must immediately make out the Muster Roll and Reg Rolls for the Company to which I belong which is a strong intimation that our money is at hand if I reserve the whole of my pay I shall be able to send you Towards a hundred Dollars + I should not feel safe in sending it by mail as letter often miscarry I will therefore the moment I receive it write to you and I wish you and William would come and see me as the expense will not be great My duty is not hard I have nothing to do but write only when there is fighting I have been fortunate enough to escape all the British balls but I have had them make lively music around my ears + once had my musket taken out of my hand by a 24 lb shot from the British while in action Coll Tozer arrived here last evening after the action Coll Saml Satterlee Bl + the rest of those from Pennsylvania were here in the action none of them were killed old Golden is as tough as a bull I wish you to write to me by mail immediately without fail give my Compliments to Father + Mother and to all the rest of the family + tell them that I am hearty and well fail not to write L Hovey

yours

N Hovey